

MINUTES
SPECIAL WORKSESSION/ROUNDTABLE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CONFERENCE ROOM 190, YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
November 17, 2009
3:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nelson called the City Council meeting to order.

Councilmembers Present: Shoop, Mendoza, Beeson (arrived at 3:02 p.m.), McClendon, Nicholls, Johnson and Mayor Nelson

Councilmembers Absent: none

Staffmembers Present: City Administrator, Mark S. Watson
Director of Engineering, Paul Brooberg
Director of Community Development, Laurie Lineberry
Traffic Engineer, Dan Sanders
Executive Director of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, Charles Flynn
CIP Project Manager, Kevin Eatherly
Director of Parks & Recreation, Becky Chavez
Various Department Heads or their representative
City Clerk, Brigitta M. Kuiper

I. MAJOR ROADWAYS PLAN

Watson: Tonight's discussion is part of an ongoing review of the widths of City roadways in terms of the Major Roadway Plan (MRP) designations.

Lineberry and Brooberg presented the following information:

5th Avenue from 6th Street to 16th Street

- The City Council was given a preview of this section at a previous Special Worksession; tonight staff is interested in receiving Council direction.
- 5th Avenue from 6th Street to 8th Street is designated as a Collector. There is enough right-of-way already dedicated to accommodate a Collector width, so there is no harm in leaving it as is in the MRP.
- 5th Avenue – 8th Street to 16th Street
 - Currently, the roadway is designated as a Collector and has an 80-foot wide right-of-way.
 - The intersections at 10th Street, 12th Street and 14th Street should remain as they are until they are undergoing design.
 - Currently, there is no pressing need to expand them.
 - Once 12th Street is constructed over the East Main Canal, it will become more of a Collector than it is now and the intersection of 5th Avenue with 12th Street will need expansion.

- The 12th Street intersection is the most likely to impact all four corner properties when improved.
- Staff is recommending that the Collector designation end from 14th to 16th Streets and 5th Avenue revert back to a Local street.
 - Traffic on 5th Avenue would feed into 14th Street to reach the expanded 16th Street and 4th Avenue intersection.
 - Redevelopment of this area will undoubtedly force the City to close 5th Avenue at 16th Street, making the Collector designation unnecessary.
 - Traffic on 5th Avenue could also move toward 7th Avenue at 14th Street since 7th Avenue will cross 16th Street with a signal and connect to 8th Avenue south of 16th Street.

Avenue B from 8th Street to Interstate 8

- Currently, this section is designated as a Principal Arterial Constrained and has 112-foot right-of-way.
- Connecting Avenue B to Interstate 8 would make use of an existing highway interchange at this point.
- A canal is buried near the eastern boundary of the road.
 - If the City builds over a pipeline canal, it thereby owns the pipeline and must be responsible for its maintenance. This canal is the Thacker Canal.
 - Moving the roadway to the west and working with the Yuma County Water Users Association to relocate their canal would allow the City to avoid building over a canal.
- Current designs call for seven lanes, three lanes north, three lanes south, one center turn lane and no median.

Discussion

- Connecting Avenue B will bring much more traffic to Avenue B. The intersection of Avenue B and 16th Street, even after improvements, will be a problem, per the 16th Street and 4th Avenue Corridor studies. In addition, it would create another bridge over the Colorado River and require the City to buy up significant private properties. It would be better to connect Avenue D, where an intersection would be unrestrained by development.
- Everyone in the Yuma Valley has to cross town to get to Interstate 8. An interchange costs from \$8-10 million. A bridge would be needed to reach the interchange. The bridge would have to begin south of the levee, crossing the levee, the MODE and the Colorado River.
- Staff has not approached Shaw Industries in regard to this connection.
 - Shaw has indicated a concern to keep their internal roadways open for their use, especially when people use the Shaw fields for soccer and park where they obstruct Shaw's trucking entrance/lane.
- A review of Avenue D and the Yuma Loop versus Avenue B connecting to Interstate 8 needs to be made prior to moving forward.
 - The Yuma Loop has been included in Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization's roadway plan.
 - Creating the Yuma Loop could solve internal problems on other streets in the City.
 - The Yuma Loop could become a delineation between rural/agriculture and urban.
 - The location of a bridge across the river would involve the Quechan and the Cocopah Indian Tribes as they both have land in this area.

- Perhaps a joint meeting of the City Council and the Quechan and Cocopah Indian tribes could be arranged to discuss the issue.
- The Quechan Indian Nation has indicated interest in Avenue D connecting to Interstate 8.
- Staff has considered the area next to the river, north of 1st Street, as a place where industry should go in the future, because of easy access to water and Interstate 8; there have been discussions with the Cocopah concerning extending the West Wetlands into their territory.

II. TRAFFIC TIMING ON 16TH STREET

Sanders briefed the City Council on the 16th Street traffic issues, as follows:

16th Street Reconstruction Project:

- Overview Summary
 - Scope: 16th Street from Arizona Avenue to Yuma Palms Parkway
 - Administered by Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)
 - Commenced September 14, 2009; scheduled duration 12 months, negotiated down from 18th months.
 - Widening: from five lanes to six lanes divided by a raised median to restrict left hand turns.
 - Includes a complete Interstate 8 bridge reconstruction, with three new signals
 - Current average daily vehicle traffic: 36,000 vehicles per day
- Construction
 - To reduce the project duration from the original 18 months to 12 months, a joint decision was reached between ADOT and the City of Yuma to allow the contractor to reduce the roadway cross-section during the construction process from 4 lanes to 2 lanes, with the exception of Yuma's peak winter visitor season, from December 20, 2009 through March 31, 2010.
 - No left turns are allowed through the construction zone, including at the intersections.
- Arizona Avenue Intersection Improvements
 - Originally within the scope of the 16th Street Project
 - A split project administered solely, by the City of Yuma.
 - Commenced mid-July 2009
 - Originally scheduled for completion in May 2010; revised completion date: December 2009
 - Intersection improvements: widened to six lanes, dual left turn lanes, right turn bays and a new traffic signal.
- Business Access During Construction
 - Both projects include a special signage to guide the public to the places of business.
 - No left turns are permitted at the intersections east of Maple Avenue, including Arizona Avenue.
 - There are no left turns at the interstate ramps; eastbound and westbound restrictions apply; traffic can access Interstate 8 through detours and u-turns.
- Why no left turns permitted at Arizona Avenue even after project is complete?
 - Storm sewer construction will require a large hole in the middle of 16th Street, 120 feet east of Arizona Avenue.

- There is not enough distance between the storm sewer construction to have a left turn lane for westbound traffic to turn south at Arizona Avenue.
 - The left turn volumes on Arizona Avenue would require a minimum 250-foot turn bay; there is only 120 feet available and only one lane of traffic going west. Allowing left turns at Arizona Avenue from 16th Street would effectively block all westbound traffic.
- Traffic Signal Timing
 - Traffic signal timing is the allocation of a traffic signal's cycle to each of the traffic movements possible at an intersection.
 - The time is divvied up by assigning a percentage of an hour to each movement; giving more time to one movement takes it away from another.
 - The flow of traffic on 16th Street would best be accommodated if there were no signal at Arizona Avenue.
 - Activating the Arizona Avenue signal for cross traffic will decrease the amount of time allocated to 16th Street flow.
 - Allowing left turns from 16th Street south to Arizona Avenue would likewise restrict 16th Avenue flow by adding another movement at the signal.
 - Split phasing involves moving one direction of traffic on a street, including left turns, and then moving the other direction of traffic, including left turns; it is typically done when separate left-turn lanes are not present. This, however, would reduce the flow of traffic on 16th Street even further. Split phasing is very inefficient because opposing traffic must wait for each other.
- Traffic Signals – 16th Street Application
 - Aerials of traffic queuing were displayed.
 - The backing up of traffic at the Interstate 8 off-ramps must be kept to a minimum to avoid the blocking of high speed through traffic.

Sanders ran a traffic simulation showing how the intersections would work using split phasing; the simulation resulted in a reduction in the service level. A eastbound traffic would be at a standstill while waiting for westbound traffic and vice versa. Traffic delays would double.

- Through an agreement with ADOT, the City of Yuma is now providing traffic signal timing for the 16th Street corridor.
- Staff is constantly monitoring the situation and will continue working with ADOT, to make improvements to the 16th Street Corridor when appropriate.

Discussion

- The timing signal for the westbound on/off ramps for car stacking is 35 seconds for green.
- Stacking becomes a problem with left turns from 16th Street to Arizona Avenue, a concern for business access.
- The fifty new traffic signals that will come into the City's system once the turnbacks are complete will be run on several sub-timing systems specific to their area's traffic patterns.
- Traffic can access businesses on the south side of 16th Street via 1st Avenue with detours taking them to 18th Street, Arizona Avenue, Maple Avenue and Riley Avenue. Maple Avenue further west would accomplish the same thing for westbound traffic. The City paved 18th Street from Arizona Avenue to Riley Avenue and has installed numerous signs.

- City staff will continue to work closely with ADOT so that as the situation changes, traffic advantages can be taken, where possible. The City controls the signal timing in conjunction with ADOT.
- The viability of local businesses is at stake. Are smaller left turn lanes feasible?
 - Staff will keep working with ADOT.
 - In roughly one month, there will be two lanes open in each direction.
- It is unreasonable not to allow a left turn lane at Arizona Avenue from 16th Street, given the width of the newly-constructed 16th Street at this point, which is 72 feet. The businesses on the south side of 16th Street are losing traffic from Interstate 8. Chretien's and the cigar shop accesses are completely blocked and there is no mention of Chretien's on the signs until farther into the detour. The only left turn that is needed is south for westbound traffic; there's no demand for a left-turn going north onto Arizona Avenue for eastbound 16th Street traffic.
 - Staff has installed blue signs to specifically state Chretien's.
 - These signs need to be more descriptive of the turns a driver needs to take.
 - The street is not 72 feet wide at the choke point, but the difficulty is that there is not the length needed to handle the volume of stacking.
 - The curb and gutter can be removed and a temporary lane built to accommodate this turn – something ADOT does on a regular basis in its projects.
 - This may not be as easy as it appears. Eliminating a left turn northbound to Arizona Avenue would not eliminate split phasing.
 - A parallel situation exists for those businesses to the north.
- Once two lanes are open in each direction, it may be possible to have one lane be a left-turn lane; however, 16th Street will be carrying much more traffic by then and that must be taken into consideration.
- The businesses affected are unique in nature. If they don't make their money in the winter visitor season they will go bankrupt and no longer exist. They cannot have tall pole signs; they must be allowed adequate signage and left-turn access from 16th Street.
- Perhaps the use of larger, lighted sign could be used temporarily, but the cost would be of \$250 each per month.
- City staff will work creatively with ADOT to implement City Council's directions.

III. GANDOLFO ANNEX BUILDING

Flynn and Eatherly briefed the City Council on the status of the Gandolfo Annex in light of a recent report and the recommendations staff will be making to the Historic District Review (HDRC). HDRC will be making the final decision on the building's future.

- The City purchased the Gandolfo Annex in the 1970's; prior to that time, it was used as artists studios, shops and offices.
- Though the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the building was sold to a local developer in 1996; after a structural analysis, the developer determined the project was cost prohibitive.
- The property was returned to the City in 2001 and used for miscellaneous storage.
- On October 4, 2006, the City Council authorized a second RFP for the property in an attempt to create a public/private partnership to determine ways to incentivize the project and restore the building.

- John Sternitzke was the only bidder out of 16 individuals who attended the pre-bidder's conference.
- Sternitzke and City staff agreed that additional information was needed prior to making a recommendation to the City Council, specifically:
 - An updated structural analysis noted "severe deterioration to the foundation on the west side of the building, with walls 4-6 inches out of plumb."
 - A soils condition report reported poor percolation and drainage conditions
 - An environmental inspection report was prepared.
- In the Spring of 2008, an earthquake and aftershocks caused further damage to the building
 - The City immediately engaged Slaysman Engineering, a structure engineering firm, to develop a shoring plan.
 - Slaysman Engineering concluded that two-thirds to three-quarters of the building needed to be demolished. The adobe walls are sitting on no foundation and the portion of the building that is more historic is the most unstable. The more stable portion of the building was rebuilt in brick after the 1916 flood.
 - HDRC has approved the demolition of the north and west walls of the building; however, partial demolition could further de-stabilize the building and the project could end up being minus any of the original adobe structure. New walls would have to be constructed to brace the walls that would be left.
 - The City consulted with Nielsen-Fackler Planning Development, Inc. and all – Sternitzke, Nielsen-Fackler and City staff – agreed the project is not financially feasible.
- Staff will recommend to HDRC the following:
 - All efforts to save the building have been exhausted.
 - Demolition of the building should proceed with the following conditions:
 - Any redevelopment of the site must "reflect similar style and scale in new construction and architecture sympathetic to the Gandolfo Annex."
 - In the interim, the property should not be used for parking, but be landscaped.
 - HDRC must be involved in any new design preparations.
- Demolition will cost the City \$500,000.
- The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation Board of Directors have been taken aback by this situation and are now trying to determine what other buildings might be able to be saved if efforts are undertaken now.

Discussion

- The planned landscaping will consist of minimal desert landscaping. The block wall behind the building will remain. The site will be below grade after demolition.
- Would it be feasible to have the land appraised and put out on the market?
 - Moving this property in the current economic situation may not be possible.
 - The cost differential between new construction versus lease rates in the area is significant, making new construction virtually infeasible.
 - Staff will follow City Council direction; the intent is to preserve the site and ultimately have this site redeveloped to fit into the streetscape in a style reflective of the nature of the Downtown area.
 - The intent of past City Councils is for the City not to own any Downtown property.
 - Staff is pursuing grant money to refurbish the Downtown buildings that may help increase their value and their lease rates; at that time, redevelopment of this property will

be possible.

- Could the exterior bricks be saved for future reuse; that has been discussed with HDRC and is a distinct possibility.

IV. YUMA ART CENTER EXPANSION

Watson asked to delay this item, in deference to the need for an Executive Session, noting that staff will brief the City Council more fully prior to its decision on the acquisition of property for the Yuma Art Center. The funding for this acquisition would be impact fees collected for arts and cultural activities. The expansion is part of the current Yuma Art Center master plan.

V. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Watson asked whether City Councilmembers had any questions or comments regarding the information they were provided about the actions he has taken with regards cost saving measures associated with City staff. Each City employee, with the exception of public safety personnel, will need to take 24 hours of unpaid furlough by March 1, 2010. In addition, the City will strictly manage overtime hours for those in the public safety arena. This should bring the current budget into balance, assuming revenues do not drastically drop. Updates will be continuous.

VI. UPDATES

Watson advised City Councilmembers that he has forwarded them an e-mail from the Yuma Little League concerning their request for additional baseball fields. The Parks and Recreation Commission has been apprised of the request. Unfortunately, the City does not have enough fields to accommodate all its programs and this request. Staff would like to keep the issue at the commission level.

By way of information, **Chavez** presented the following:

- The City could not accommodate Yuma Little League when they first asked to be a part of the City's system; this year, Yuma Little League has been a co-sponsoring organization.
 - As a co-sponsoring organization they will no longer pay field rentals and it will cost \$2 per child to participate, just as any other co-sponsored participant.
- Yuma Little League currently uses the Centennial Middle School baseball field; staff has also offered Yuma Little League another facility, Sanguinetti Field, for their use, which will expand their schedule by 18 games per week. They use Joe Henry Park and Shaw Industries field on weekends.
- Scheduling all of the City's facilities among the various organizations and activities is no small task; the fields are constantly in use by one group or another.
- The Yuma Little League would like a single facility to call their own – a wish many of the other co-sponsoring organizations share.
 - They would like the Kennedy baseball fields; however, these fields are the only ones in the community with 300-foot fields – the only fields that can accommodate the men's softball leagues, which has over 400 participants.
- The Parks and Recreation Commission has directed staff not to displace the existing, successful program to allow another entity to come in.

- Yuma Little League is taking registrations earlier than the other co-sponsoring organizations, so the number of participants is not available yet. Their season starts in March and ends in May. Last year, participation grew slightly.
- The issue is one of balancing facility use.

Watson stated that Senator John McCain toured the Wetlands and the Riverfront areas. Quechan Indian Tribe President Jackson was also present. The group also viewed the location of the proposed Federal Courthouse; a decision on courthouse funding is soon to be made.

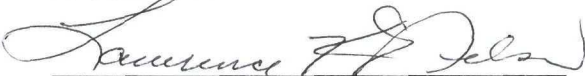
Representatives from the City of Mexicali have been in attendance tonight.

VII. ADJOURNMENT/EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion (Beeson/Mendoza): To adjourn to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.


Brigitta M. Kuiper, City Clerk

APPROVED:


Lawrence K. Nelson, Mayor

